WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
KING COUNTY EXTENSION

King County

King County Commercial Agriculture and Community Horticulture Programming

WSU Extension King County has a long history of promoting healthy, productive horticulture and agriculture communities through education and demonstration research. With urban and rural growth, maintaining environmental integrity and water quality is paramount to preserving a green King County. Agriculture and Community Horticulture programming promotes sustainable growing practices for King County farmers, land managers and gardeners that minimize pesticide and nutrient runoff.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES :

- Conduct educational programs to improve the economic, environmental, and/or social long-term viability of agriculture and horticulture.
- Emphasize environmental stewardship within agriculture programs to encourage integrated pest management, resource recycling and other conservation practices that help maintain environmental quality.
- Serve commercial growers in identifying and decision-making of problems.
- Engage horticultural communities in the promotion of sound gardening practices.
- Promote on-farm research to address agricultural and horticultural issues and needs.
- Serve and support King County residents in identifying and solving plant and pest problems.
- Provide educational leadership and support to Master Gardener programs.

Growers learning how to assess farmland and soil health. *Photo T. Murray*

Program Highlight:
Field Workshops for Hmong Farmers

In collaboration with WSU Small Farms Program, WSU Extension is visiting farms throughout the summer to offer on-farm training events. Topics covered during each workshop include basics to developing farm plans, accessing healthy farm land, record-keeping, marketing and IPM. The goal of each of the nine workshops is to educate growers about risk reduction. There is a need in the Hmong community to reduce economic and health risks on the farm.

Program Highlight:
Hmong Growers get IPM Certified

Fifteen Hmong growers completed forty-eight hours of class work. Growers learned the fundamentals of Integrated Pest Management (or IPM). Growers learned pest identification and biology, alternative pest management strategies. Growers also received training on pesticide and pest management safety along with Federal and State laws and regulations. Coursework was developed around life skills training where growers learned basic math, vocabulary, decision-making and record-keeping. Upon completion of the training, students received their pest management certificates for graduation. Eleven Hmong growers went on to take the WSDA Pesticide Applicators license test.

Graduating class.

Photo T. Murray

June 2005

Mid-Year Accomplishments for Services, Educational Outreach & Research Collaborations

- Over 250 residents, ranging from Master Gardeners, rural landowners to YMCA Youth Leaders, received horticultural and integrated pest management education through twelve presentations and workshops.
- Master Gardeners received gardening education through fact sheets, news articles and group meetings.
- Fifteen WSU Extension personnel received 'First Detector' training as part of the country-wide development of the National Plant Diagnostic Network in collaboration with WSU College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences.
- To date, over fifty commercial growers and King County residents received pest and plant problem diagnosis through physical sample submissions along with many other phone and electronic consultations. In all cases, pesticides or chemical fertilizers are not needed to solve plant problems nor recommended as a sole solution, thus saving customers money and reducing environmental risks.
- Development of small fruits program for the 95th Western Washington Horticultural Association Annual Convention.
- Risk management for Hmong farmers in collaboration with WSU Small Farms Program.
- Integrated pest management for raspberry beetle in collaboration with WSU Whatcom County and Scottish Crop Research Institute. Funded by American Farmland Trust, EPA Region 10 and Red Raspberry Commission
- Introducing new technologies for detecting Phytophthora root rot in raspberries in collaboration with WSU Whatcom County. Funded by Red Raspberry Commission and Commission on Pesticide Registration.
- Natural enemy survey for blueberry aphids in collaboration with WSU Prosser. Funded by Blueberry Commission.
- Entomopathic nematodes for managing the exotic pest, cherry bark tortrix. A research project in collaboration with WSU Entomology and USDA-ARS Wapato.

Program Highlight:

King County Volunteers on Frontline of Detecting Exotic Pests

Thirty-six volunteers from the King County Master Gardener program and Seattle Scarab Society joined up with the Washington State Department of Agriculture Exotic Pest Program to survey for two new exotic wireworm species. Two new species identified in the state are known, serious pests of agricultural crops in other parts of the world. Volunteers were trained on biology, identification and survey methods need to delimitate the range and activity of the new pests. Volunteers surveyed at fifty locations in King County for both wireworm species and generated excellent data on distribution and phenology for this little understood pest.

Future Plans

- Develop specific research programs to address production problems for King County vegetable, small fruit and/or cut flower growers.
- Develop educational forums for agriculture and commercial horticulture growers to disseminate information such as pest alerts, crop conditions reports and crop activity reminders.
- Review, revise and create content for Master Gardeners, Community Horticulture Fact Sheets and Dial Extension.

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